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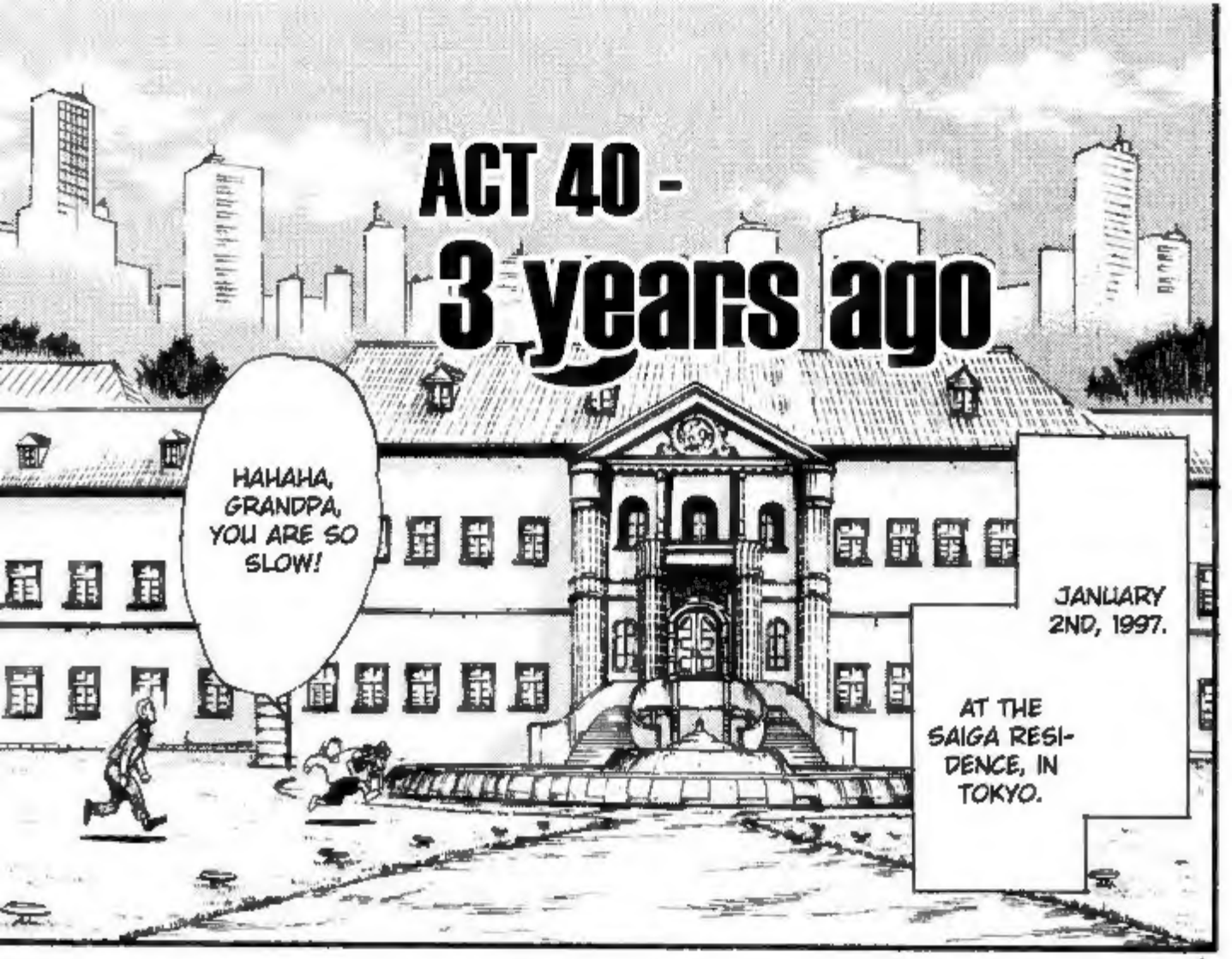
ACT 40 -
3 years ago
HAHAHA, GRANDPA, YOU ARE SO SLOW!
JANUARY 2ND, 1997.
AT THE SAIGA RESIDENCE, IN TOKYO.

I WON!

WHOA! YOU'RE FAST NOW, GRANDPA!
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, MASARU? I'M GONNA WIIIIN!

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INCREDIBLE, GRANDPA! YOU PASSED ME EASILY!
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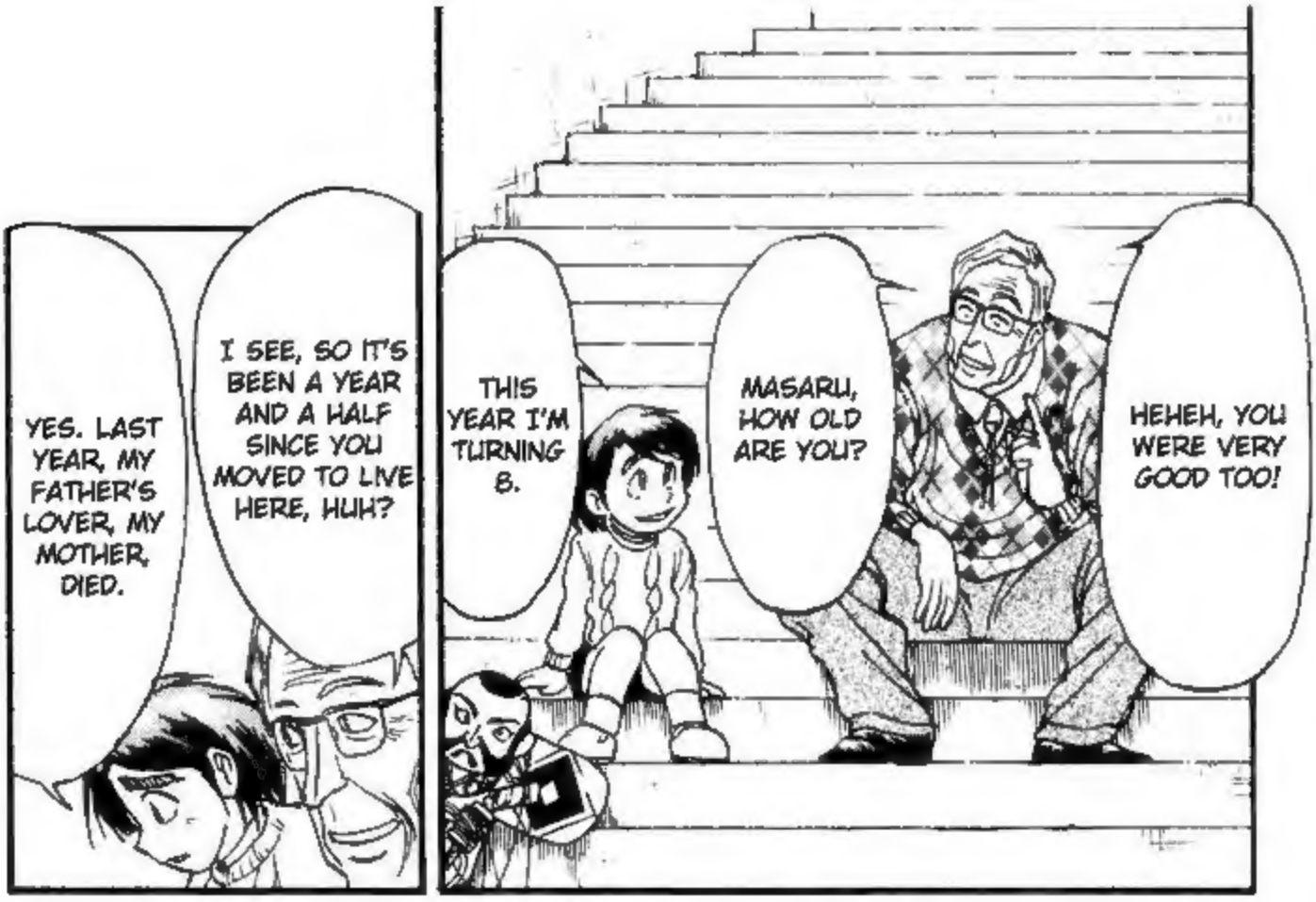
YES. LAST YEAR, MY FATHER'S LOVER, MY MOTHER, DIED.
I SEE, SO IT'S BEEN A YEAR AND A HALF SINCE YOU MOVED TO LIVE HERE, HUH?
THIS YEAR I'M TURNING 8.
MASARU, HOW OLD ARE YOU?
HEHEH, YOU WERE VERY GOOD TOO!

BUT IN THIS BIG HOUSE, I DID NOT HAVE ANYONE TO CONFIDE TO ME ...
REMEMBER, MASARU, WHEN I FOUND YOU WEEPING.

2

WHO IS IT?
A LITTLE BOY CRYING ...
IT'S A SHAME, HUH.
COME ON...

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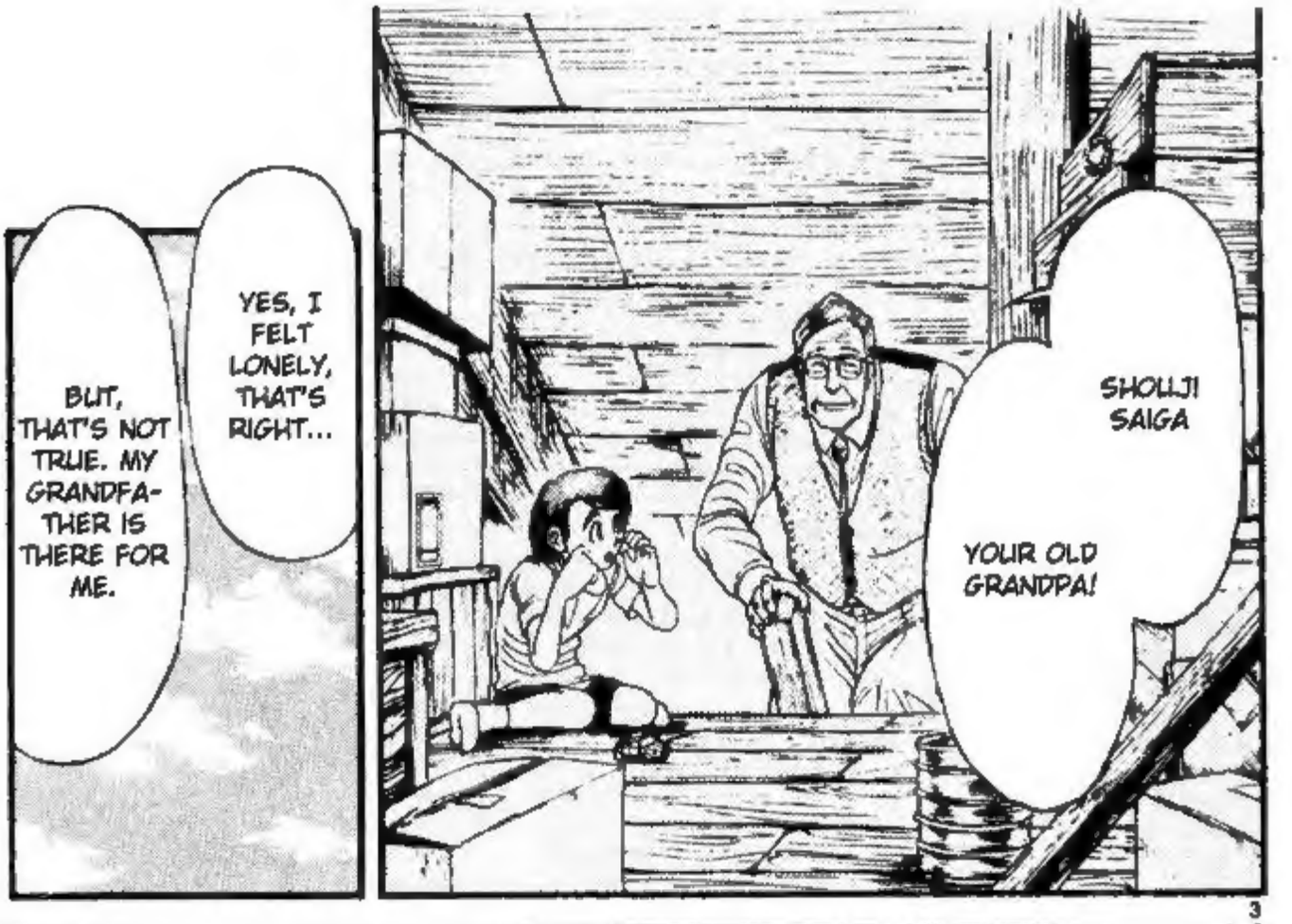

BUT, THAT'S NOT TRUE. MY GRANDFATHER IS THERE FOR ME.
YES, I FELT LONELY, THAT'S RIGHT...
SHOUJI SAIGA
YOUR OLD GRANDPA!
3

HAHA! THAT HURTS, GRANDPA!
OHHH! HOW KIND OF YOU!

BIG BROTHERS AND BIG SISTERS...
AH ...

MASARU! WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH GRANDPA?

TOKUOMI (23), YOUNGEST SON.
TAKAKO (25), YOUNGEST DAUGHTER.
KAYO (28), OLDEST DAUGHTER.
KOTARO (29), OLDEST SON.

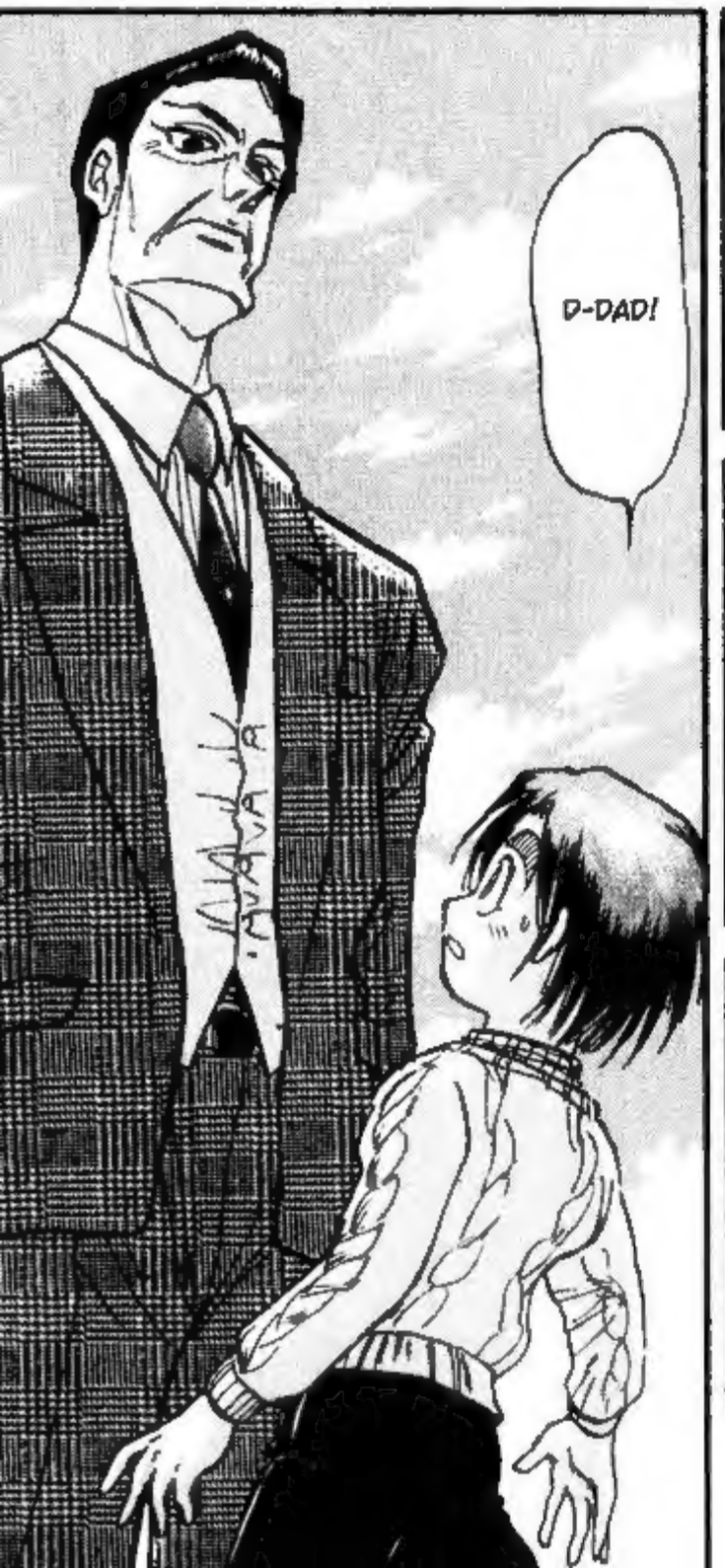
THAT'S RIGHT, YOU'RE HURTING GRANDFA-THER!
WHY DO YOU BOTHER AND TIRE YOUR GRANDFA-THER ON HIS DAY OFF?!
UH, I WISH A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OF YOU ...

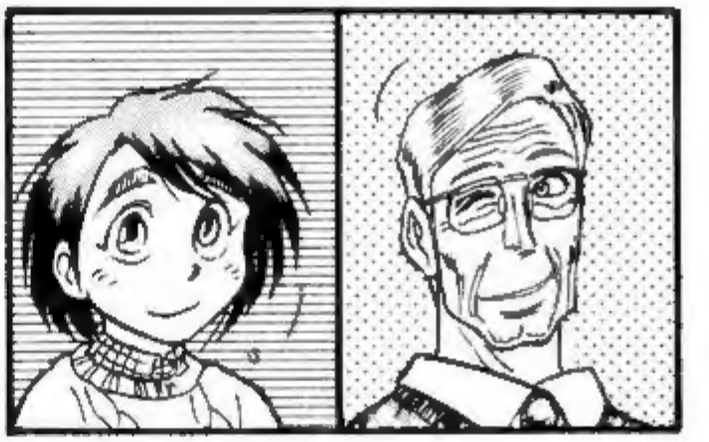
4

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU TOO, WHO DARE TO TAKE ON SOMEONE SMALLER THAN YOU!

HECK, THIS IS THE SON OF THE DAD'S MIS-TRESS...
DO YOU THINK THIS IS ENOUGH, POOR KID?
I'M .. I'M SORRY ...

Y-YES, THAT'S WHAT WE THOU-GHT!
NO, WELL, I THOUGHT THAT YOU WOULD BE TIRED AND..
GRAND-PA...
HAPPY NEW YEAR FOR YOU TOO!


D-DAD!



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OH!
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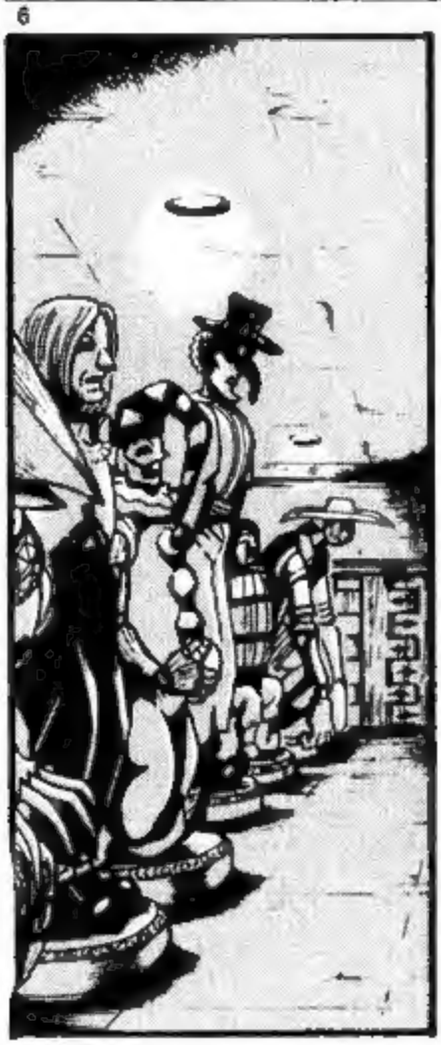
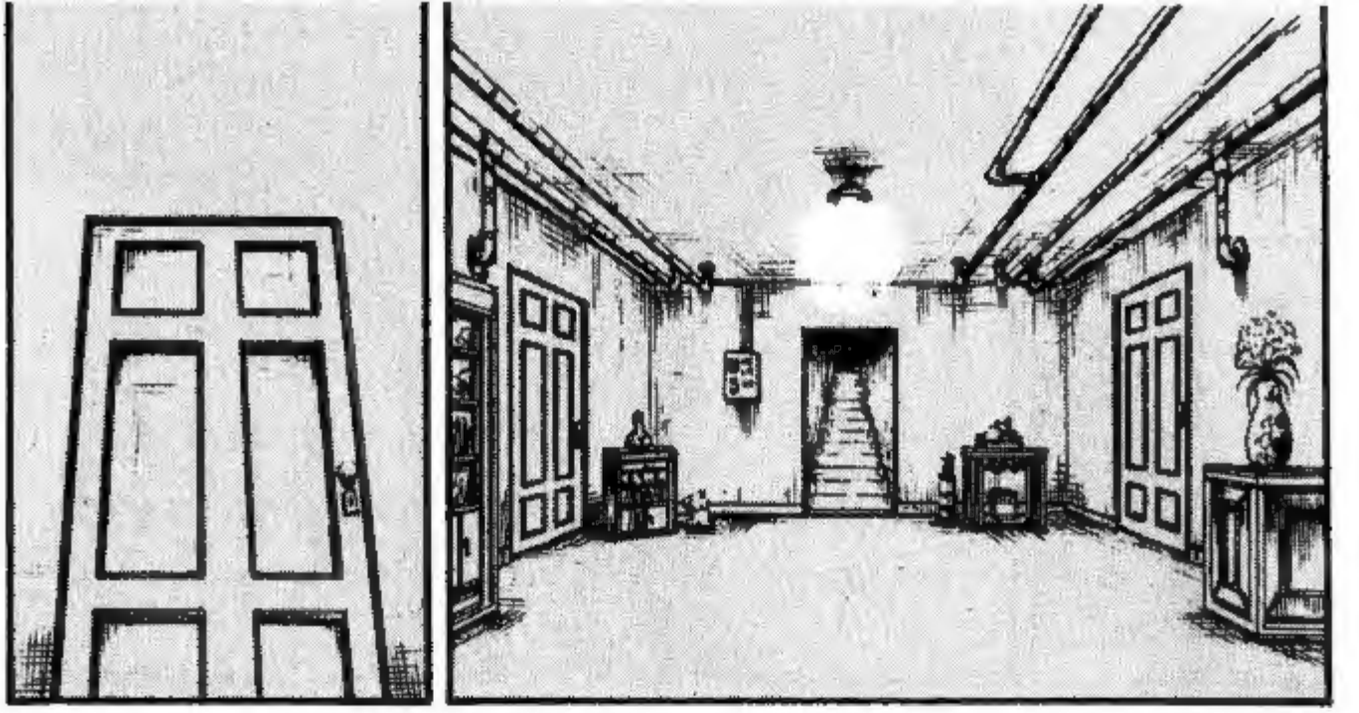
NOW, LET US PASS.
YES, YES ...
OH, HAPPY NEW YEAR FOR YOU, FATHER.

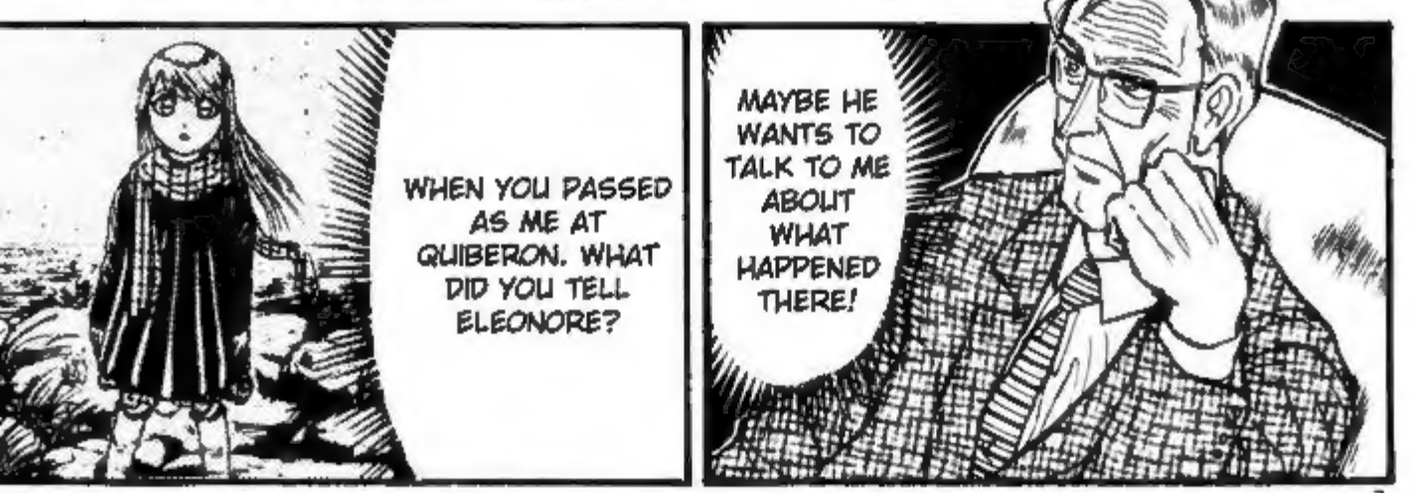
YES, YOU ALREADY TOLD US ABOUT YOUR MANSION!
FATHER, LET'S GO TO KARUIZAWA TONIGHT.

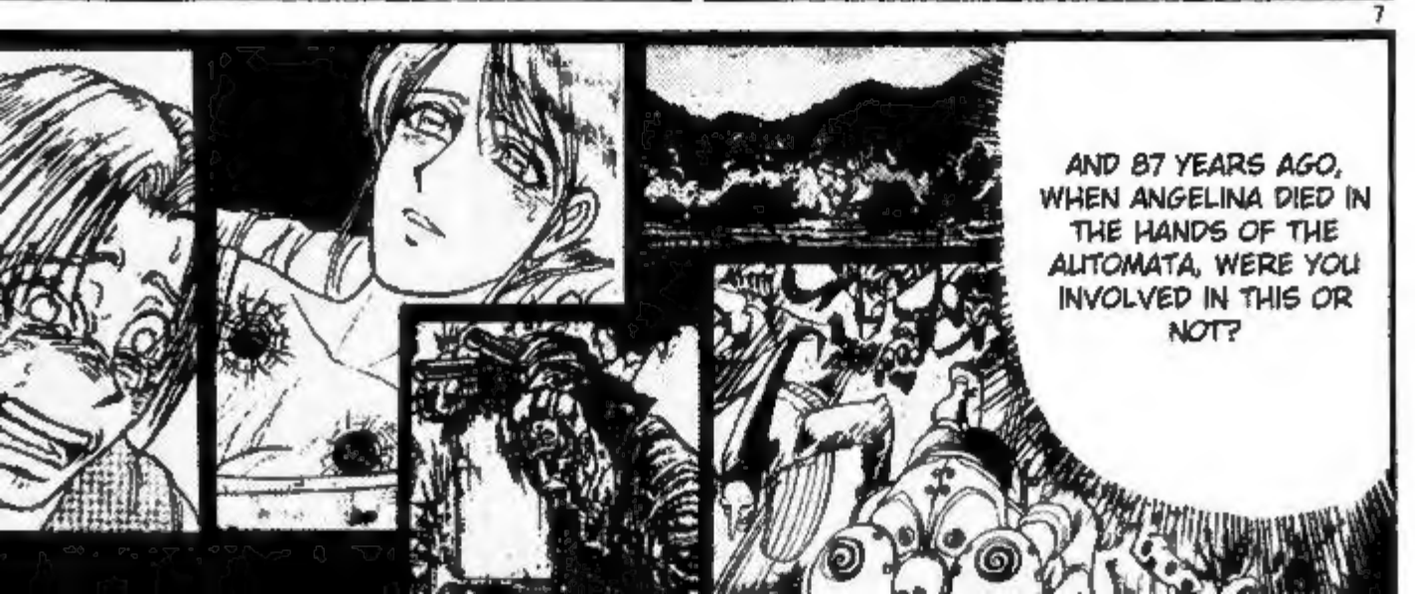


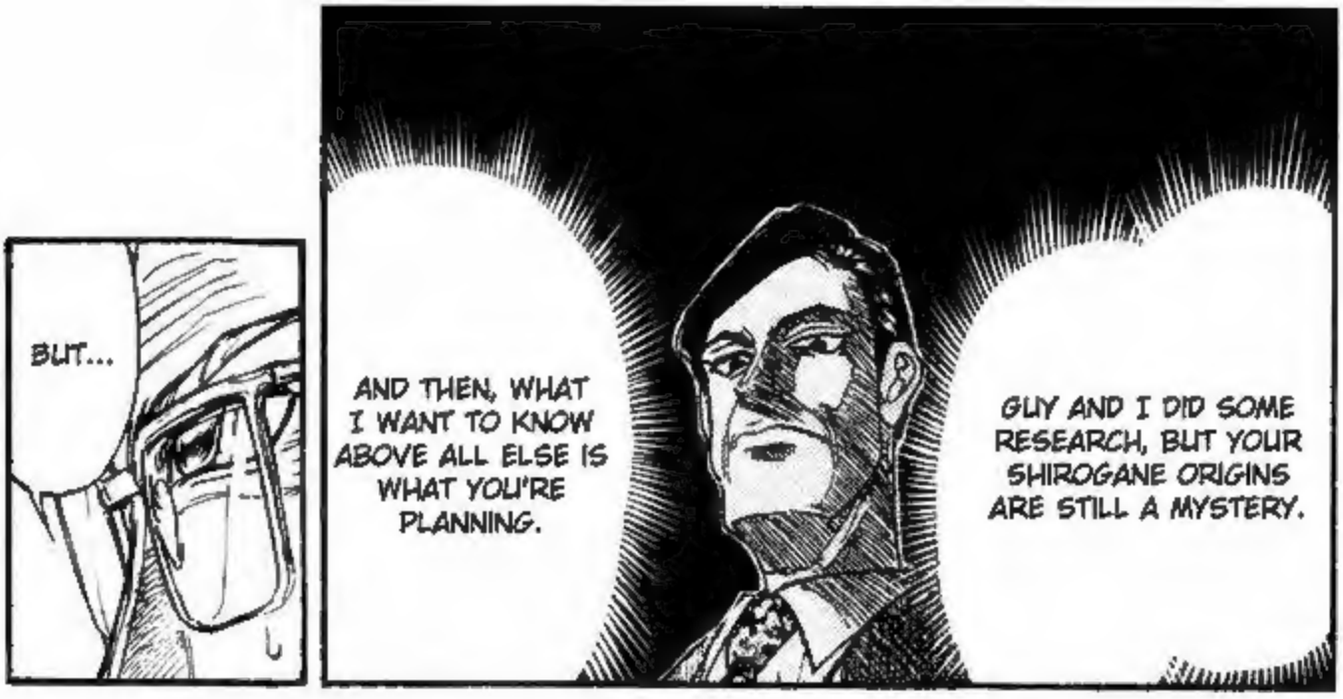
THAT NIGHT, AT THE KARUIZAWA MANSION, IN THE NAGANO REGION.
SADA-YOSHI'S VILLA, A MECHANICAL MANOR.

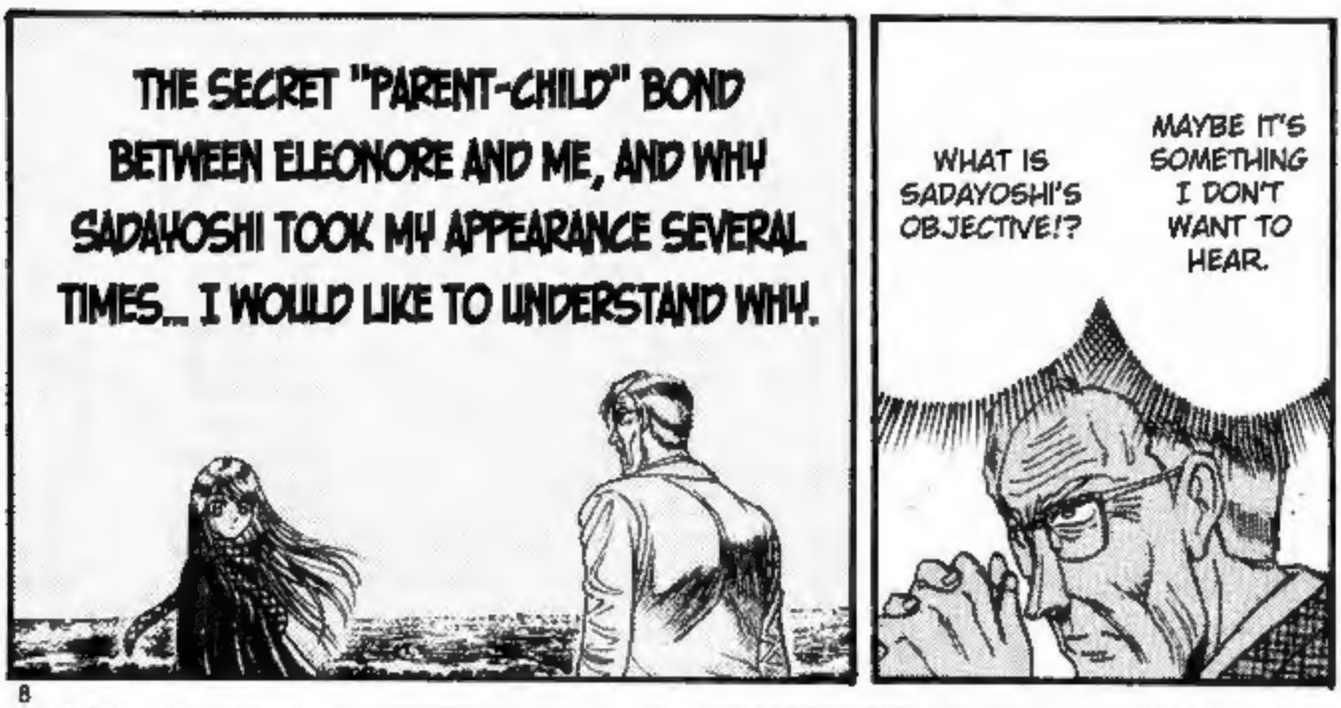


SADAYOSHI WANTS TO TALK WITH ME?
WHAT DOES HE WANT TO TALK ABOUT...


WHEN YOU PASSED AS ME AT QUIBERON. WHAT DID YOU TELL ELEONORE?
MAYBE HE WANTS TO TALK TO ME ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED THERE!

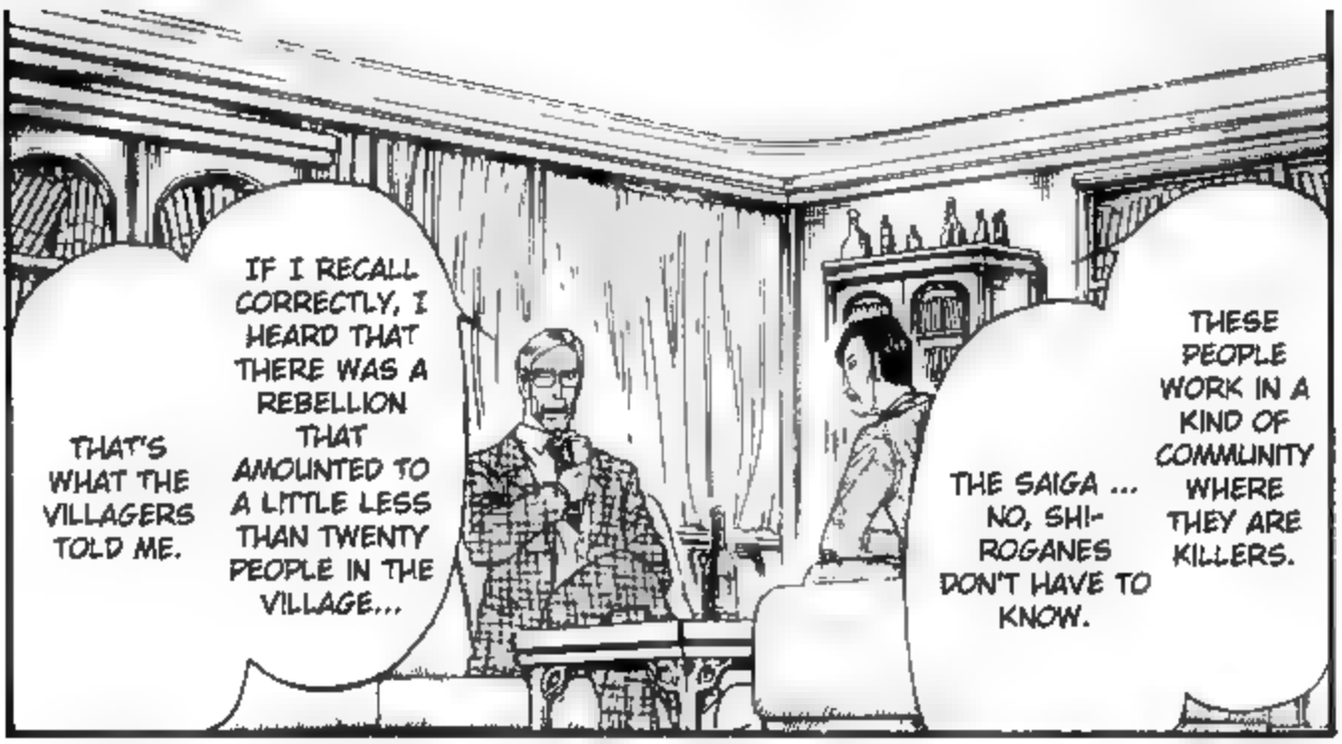

AND 87 YEARS AGO, WHEN ANGELINA DIED IN THE HANDS OF THE ALITOMATA, WERE YOU INVOLVED IN THIS OR NOT?


BUT...
AND THEN, WHAT I WANT TO KNOW ABOVE ALL ELSE IS WHAT YOU'RE PLANNING.
GUY AND I DID SOME RESEARCH, BUT YOUR SHIROGANE ORIGINS ARE STILL A MYSTERY.

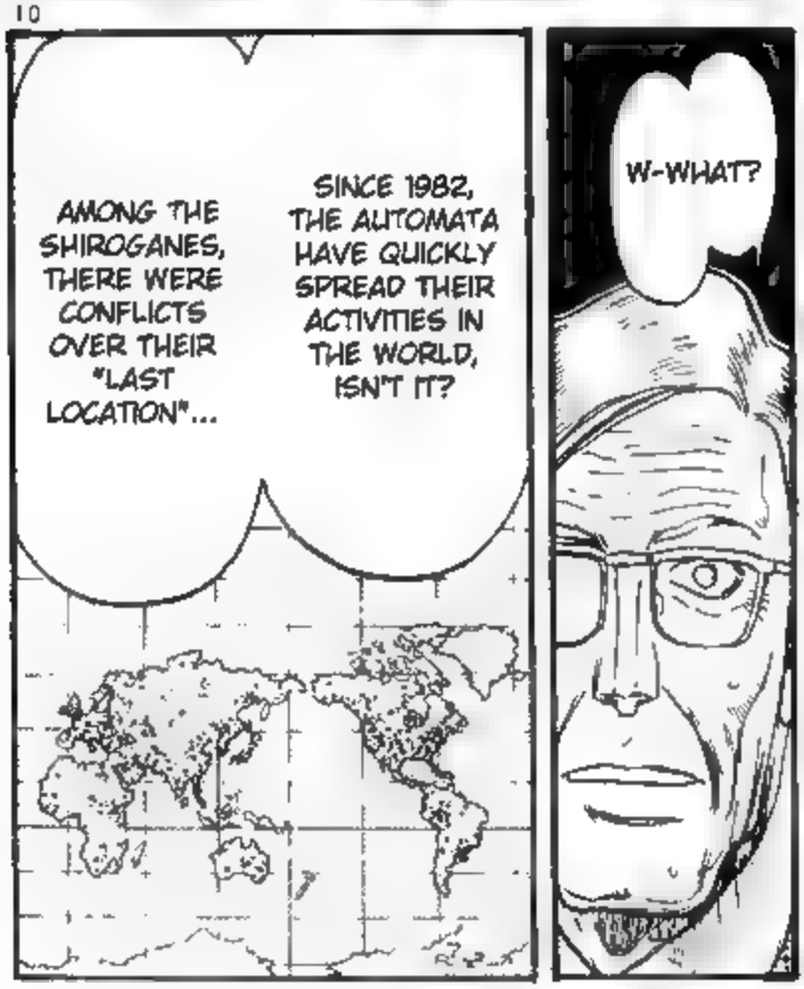

THE SECRET "PARENT-CHILD" BOND BETWEEN ELEONORE AND ME, AND WHY SADAYOSHI TOOK MY APPEARANCE SEVERAL TIMES... I WOULD LIKE TO UNDERSTAND WHY.
WHAT IS SADAYOSHI'S OBJECTIVE!?
MAYBE IT'S SOMETHING I DON'T WANT TO HEAR.

HAHAHA! DON'T SCARE ME!
IT'S OKAY, THIS IS BETTER THAN LISTEN TO YOUR CHILDREN'S FLATTERY AT HOME.
SORRY FOR THE WAIT, SHOUJI.
ガチャ

NO, I DON'T WANT TO KILL YOU.
I IMAGINE THAT AS THE CURRENT PRESIDENT, IT WOULD BE FAVORABLE TO YOU.
トポポ
ALL POSITIONS OF THE OTHER SAIGA WOULD BE AT STAKE.
IF THE ORIGINAL LEADER OF THE SAIGA COMPANY DIES,
IT'S A GOOD JOKE, HUH, SHOUJI?
I SEE, I THINK I MUST SCARE YOU IN SOME WAY.
THE PUPPETS THAT SHOUJI CREATED HAVE BEEN USED RECENTLY BY THE PUPPETEERS OF KUROGA.
SOME PEOPLE HAVE USED THESE DOLLS TO MAKE MONEY, WHICH HAS BECOME SHOUJI'S MAIN PROBLEM.
YES, IT'S ABOUT THE PROBLEM "THE MISSING PEOPLE FROM KUROGA".
WHAT DID YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT TODAY?
THE KUROGA PUPPETEERS?

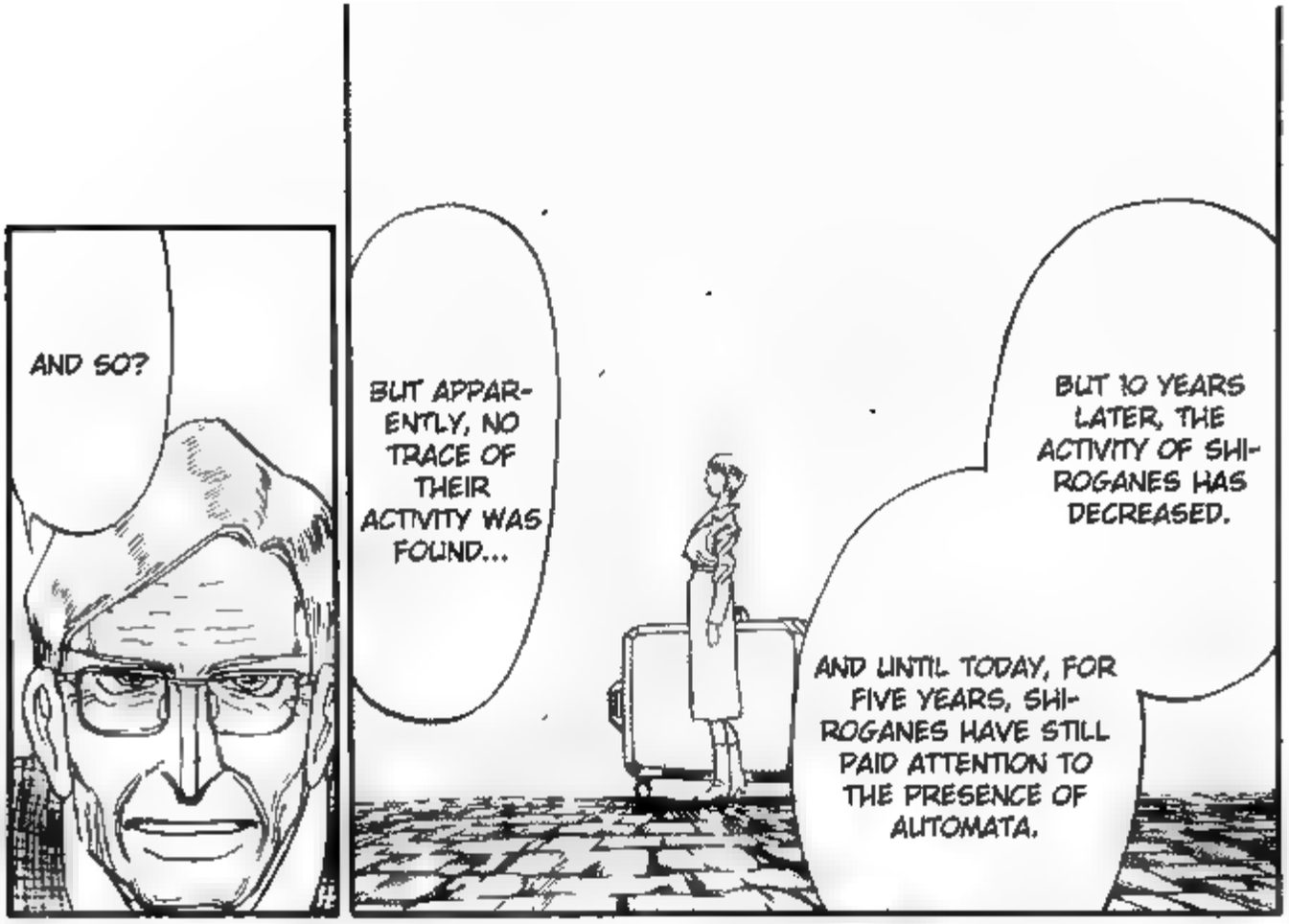

IF I RECALL CORRECTLY, I HEARD THAT THERE WAS A REBELLION THAT AMOUNTED TO A LITTLE LESS THAN TWENTY PEOPLE IN THE VILLAGE...
THAT'S WHAT THE VILLAGERS TOLD ME.
THESE PEOPLE WORK IN A KIND OF COMMUNITY WHERE THEY ARE KILLERS.
THE SAIGA ... NO, SHIROGANES DON'T HAVE TO KNOW.

THE VILLAGE OF KUROGA, HUH ...
HMM, BUT, WHAT TO DO?
IT WON'T WORK ... IT WILL ONLY BE A STIMULANT FOR THEM.
AND THERE WILL BE MANY OTHERS WHO WILL FOLLOW AFTER THEM, RIGHT?


AMONG THE SHIROGANES, THERE WERE CONFLICTS OVER THEIR "LAST LOCATION"...
SINCE 1982, THE AUTOMATA HAVE QUICKLY SPREAD THEIR ACTIVITIES IN THE WORLD, ISN'T IT?

W-WHAT?

WE DON'T NEED IT.


AND SO?
BUT APPARENTLY, NO TRACE OF THEIR ACTIVITY WAS FOUND...
BUT 10 YEARS LATER, THE ACTIVITY OF SHIROGANES HAS DECREASED.
AND UNTIL TODAY, FOR FIVE YEARS, SHIROGANES HAVE STILL PAID ATTENTION TO THE PRESENCE OF AUTOMATA.

WHICH IS TO CREATE PUPPETS, WOULD GO BANKRUPT.
THE MISSION OF THE SAIGA FAMILY...
AND THAT...
SO THAT MEANS THE BUSINESS BETWEEN THE SAIGA FAMILY AND THE SHIROGANES WILL SURELY END.

LOOK AT SECTION 16 AND 17.
MY NOTES.
WHAT IS THIS?
READ THIS.
BUT WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT THE VILLAGE OF KUROGA?

AFTER THE SHI-ROGANE HAVE DESTROYED ALL THE AUTOMATA,

LIKE TWO DOGS BITING EACH OTHER AND LOSING.

THE DOLLS WILL NO LONGER BE NEEDED, AND SO THE PUPPETEERS, THE PEOPLE OF KUROGA, WILL BE DRIVEN TO SUICIDE.

17, MASARU. MASARU IS THE BAIT.

パラ

16, SHIROGANE.

LOOK AGAIN AT 16.

WHAT... MASARU? WHAT IS THIS?!

パラ

ONE COULD SAY THAT THEY WILL BE REPLACED.

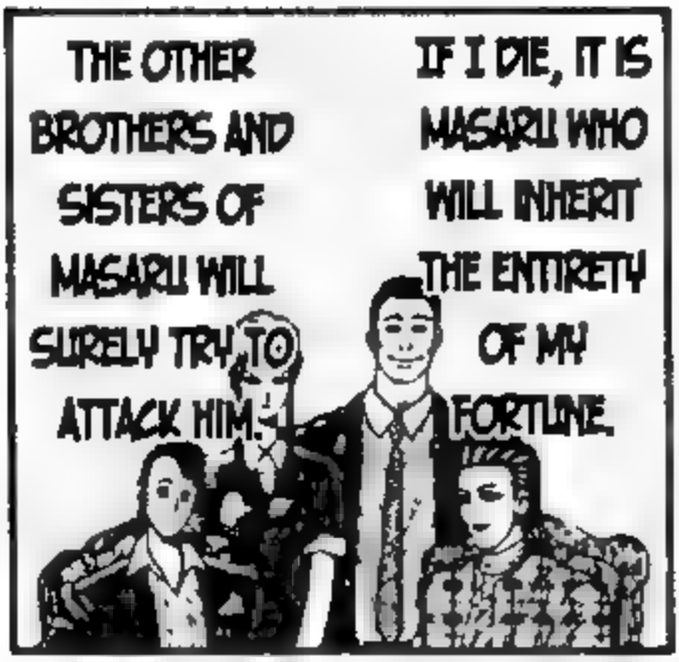
AND THEN, EVEN AFTER A HUNDRED YEARS, THESE TWO ENEMY CLANS WILL CONTINUE TO FIGHT.

AND THEN, WITH THE SHIROGANE TOOL, THE SAIGA WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE DOLLS.

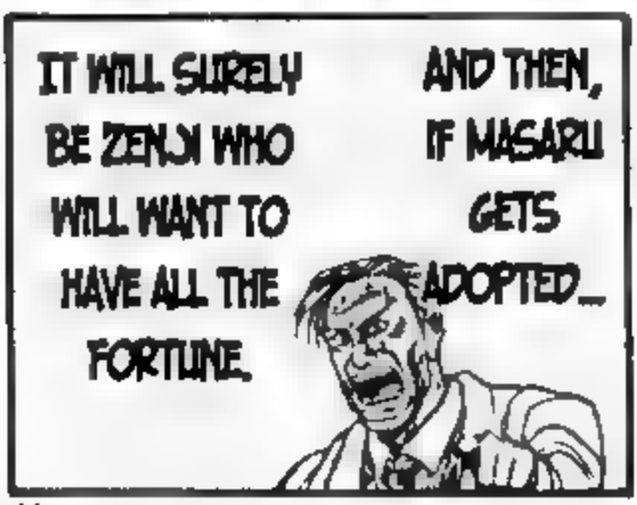
SHIROGANES WILL DESTROY ALL AUTOMATA.

THE HEAD OF THE SAIGA FAMILY MUST GIVE THE KUROGA VILLAGE SOMETHING TO BE ABLE TO IMPROVE IN THIS ART, TO USE THESE PUPPETS.
THE DOLLS WILL EVENTUALLY BE DESTROYED BY SHIROGANES.
BUT THE MISSION OF THE SAIGA HAS COME TO AN END.
YES, IT'S PENTAGON KNOCKER.
OK, WE'LL TAKE CARE OF IT. AND THE NEXT?
YES, THE THREADS ARE NOT TIGHT ENOUGH, SO...
OH YES, GRIMALDI IS...

THAT'S WHY I THOUGHT OF ANOTHER METHOD.
WHAT'S LEFT IS THE PEOPLE OF KUROGA.
JUST GET RID OF IT SO THAT THE MISSION OF THE SAIGA PERSISTS.


THE OTHER BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF MASARU WILL SURELY TRY TO ATTACK HIM.
IF I DIE, IT IS MASARU WHO WILL INHERIT THE ENTIRETY OF MY FORTUNE.

I HAD A CHILD WITH MY MISTRESS. HIS NAME IS MASARU.


IT WILL SURELY BE ZENJI WHO WILL WANT TO HAVE ALL THE FORTUNE.
AND THEN, IF MASARU GETS ADOPTED...

TO DO SO, THEY WILL ASK THOSE WHO HAVE HELD A LINK WITH THE SAIGA...
THE PEOPLE OF KUROGA.

THIS WILL BE THE END OF KUROGA PEOPLE.

WILL SECURE MASARU
MY BROTHER ZENJI, WITH THE PEOPLE OF KUROGA...

THEN, HAVING MASARU BETWEEN THESE TWO CLANS, THEY WILL DESTROY EACH OTHER WITH THE PUPPETS.

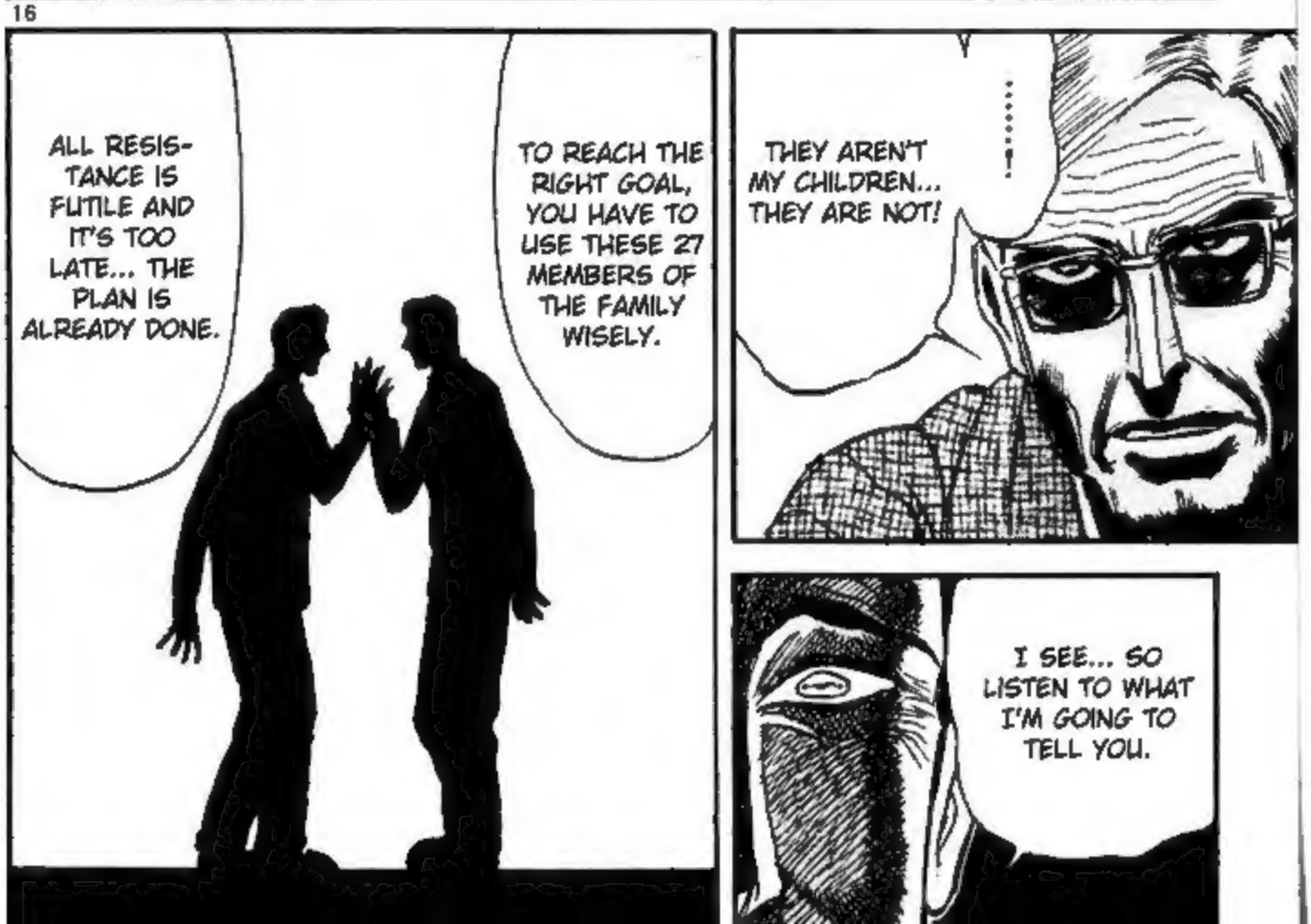
ARE YOU USING MASARU FOR SUCH A MONSTROSITY?!
SADAYOSHI, WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?!

I'M SORRY IF YOU HAVE TO FIND A RESPONSIBLE PERSON.
RELAX, SHOUJI.

MASARU... IS MASARU A BAIT?!

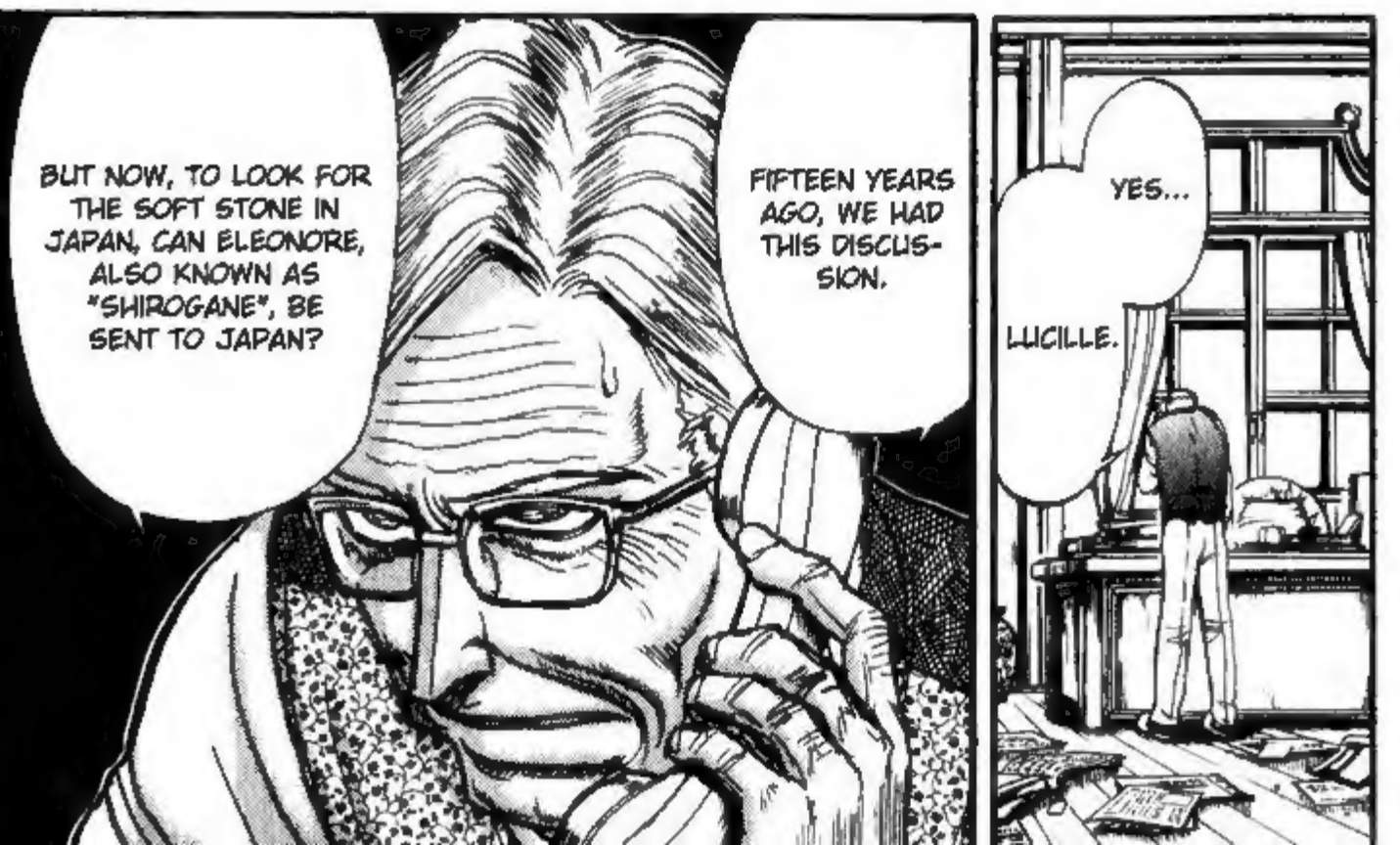
DURING THAT TIME, DIDN'T WE CREATE 27 FAMILY MEMBERS?
WE ARE SHIROGANES, WHO HAVE TO ENDURE A LONG AND PAINFUL LIFE, AND WHO HAVE TO CONSTANTLY CAMOUFLAGE US...

WE CAN SAY THAT THESE PEOPLE WHO ARE MY "REAL" CHILDREN WERE JUST COLLECTED BY ME.
AND MY WIFE, WHO IS DEAD ... IT WASN'T NECESSARY TO HAVE ALL THESE CHILDREN.
YOU AND I ARE FATHER AND SON, RIGHT?
BUT YOU ARE AN EXCEPTION, ISN'T THAT RIGHT, SHOUJI?
THE FERTILITY RATE OF SHIROGANES IS VERY LOW.
IT WAS ONLY RECOVERED FROM A BODY, HUH.
AND THEN THE ONE WHO BECAME MY BROTHER, ZENJI, AND WHO IS SUPPOSED TO BE YOUR SON TOO...


ALL RESISTANCE IS FUTILE AND IT'S TOO LATE... THE PLAN IS ALREADY DONE.
TO REACH THE RIGHT GOAL, YOU HAVE TO USE THESE 27 MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY WISELY.
THEY AREN'T MY CHILDREN... THEY ARE NOT!
.....!
I SEE... SO LISTEN TO WHAT I'M GOING TO TELL YOU.

HAHAHA! IT'S A JOKE!!
SO WHAT?
SADAYOSHI, WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?!

CONTRARY TO WHAT SADAYOSHI SAID, HE TOOK IT VERY SERIOUSLY.
SHOUJI WAS HORRIFIED.
WHO WILL WORRY ABOUT KUROGA'S KILLERS?
FORGET ALL THAT. THE PLAN TOO, I WAS KIDDING.


BUT NOW, TO LOOK FOR THE SOFT STONE IN JAPAN, CAN ELEONORE, ALSO KNOWN AS "SHIROGANE", BE SENT TO JAPAN?
FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, WE HAD THIS DISCUSSION.
YES...
LUCILLE.

I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU! I MUST PROTECT YOU FROM SADAYOSHI.
MASARU!
I TREASURE YOU JUST LIKE I DO WITH MY DAUGHTER...
LIKE THAT, INSTEAD OF HAVING TO FIGHT AGAINST AUTOMATA, SHE WILL ALSO BE SAFER.
MY DAUGHTER WHO IS A SHIROGANE WILL BE EASILY ABLE TO PROTECT MASARU.
The clock-works of time began to get in its places.
YOU WILL TAKE THIS SUITCASE AND YOU WILL RUN AWAY IMMEDIATELY.
MASARU, IF SOMETHING SERIOUS SHOULD HAPPEN...

Just as Sadayoshi had predicted.
SHIROGANE WILL PROTECT YOU.